

Media Interview Tips

Getting Ready:

Be Prepared: Before granting an interview, first ask what the topic is, who else is being interviewed, what information the reporter is looking for and when the deadline is. Then arrange a time to speak.

Determine Your Messages: Think about three or four key points you want to communicate. Write them down. Review these messages until they are top-of-mind.

Practice: Role-play likely questions to prepare for the interview, referring to your messages to be sure you're making the key points. Think about the question you hope the reporter doesn't ask and practice bridging from that question.

Summarize: Always be prepared to respond to general questions like "Tell me what you found," and "Is there anything else you'd like to add?"

Conducting the Interview:

Keep It Simple: Speak clearly and simply, using descriptive language whenever possible. Avoid jargon, acronyms and overly technical language.

Flag Key Points: Flags direct reporters to key points and should be used frequently. Examples include: "What I want to emphasize is..." and "The main point here is..."

Bridge to Your Messages: Don't be so fixated on answering the question that you forget to bridge to the point you wish to make.

Keep It Short: If you have answered the question succinctly, stop. Do not over-answer. Your message will get lost in too much content.

Stick to What You Know: Do not answer questions you are not qualified to answer, or that are outside your specific area of expertise.

Don't Fear Silence: Once you have answered a question, stop talking. Do not be afraid of the ensuing silence. Let the reporter fill the pause. It's often a ploy to get you to say more than you planned.

Keep Your Cool: Your voice and body language reveal a lot about your attitude, so practice how you want to sound and appear to your audience.